
PFLAG Edmonton

MAY 1997

MEETINGS:

Support Meeting

Tuesday, May 20, 1997

7:30 pm

Suite 103, 10612 - 124 St

We welcome all parents of lesbian, bisexual, gay and transgender children; all lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people and their family members, friends and other supportive persons.

Coffee and juice will be served.

For further information, or to talk to a supportive PFLAG parent, please call:

[REDACTED] Lynne, or

[REDACTED] Ellen, or

[REDACTED] Voicebox # 3524,

or e-mail:

[REDACTED]
or mail to :
[REDACTED]

Thankyou



Business Meeting

Tuesday, June 10, 1997

7:00pm

Suite 103, 10612 - 124 St

We are hoping that many members will be able to attend as we will be discussing, among other items, **directions for the 1997/98 year**, Gay Pride Picnic and Week, and the Alberta Campout. See you there. Decaffienated coffee will be available. Non-

members are also welcome to attend but will need to abstain from voting. Thankyou.

New Canadian PFLAG:

PFLAG Lethbridge

This parent support group met for the first time April 7, 1997. Nine people attended and have decided to meet the first Monday of the month. Next meeting is Monday May 5, 1997.

For further info please call Evelyn or Lawrence at [REDACTED]

Congratulations and best wishes to PFLAG Lethbridge!

ACROSS CANADA: Homophobia on the Wane

Honored in Ottawa

(Courtesy The Edmonton Journal, April, 1997)

The country that k.d. lang once said loved her the least paid the highest of tributes Wednesday to the unconventional (lesbian) singer from Consort, Alta.

Lang along with three other Albertans was among 50 Canadians invested in the Order of Canada by Gov. Gen. Romeo LeBlanc at a gala ceremony at Rideau Hall...

Lang will be a guest on the April 30 *Ellen* television show in which Ellen DeGeneres comes out of the closet and declares she is a lesbian.

Lang is happy to be supportive, but doesn't want to be thought of as a role model for young gay people. "I don't think of myself as someone who should impose my views on other people. I've learned that the hard way."

A proud Canadian, she was honored by the award. But living in Canada is like a hot and cold love affair. "It's like a hometown. They're your best friends and your biggest critics. It's a very close relationship between Canada and I."

British Columbia Teachers' Federation: "Eliminate Homophobia"

(Courtesy *Gale Force*, April, '97)

Delegates to the BC Teachers' Federation 1997 Annual General Meeting have elected Kit Krieger as their president. Delegates also voted overwhelmingly to

create a program to eliminate homophobia and heterosexism within the public-school system. As a first step, the BCTF will appoint a committee which will develop recommendations on strategies and report back to the 1998 AGM.

Krieger, a West Vancouver teacher and parent of two teens, said, "All students must be treated with dignity and respect regardless of their sexual orientation.

I'm proud that teachers are once again taking leadership on social issues to ensure that schools are safe and inclusive places to learn."

Krieger said that the establishment of a program at the BCTF could mean providing **staff, office space, and resources to develop anything from workshops to policies and recommendations for curriculum**. Programs are completely funded from members' dues.

All recommendations for curriculum materials must be approved by the Ministry of Education, Skills and Training, or local school boards, who have the responsibility for curriculum development.

PFLAG Edmonton

PFLAG Vancouver

(February/March newsletter)

PFLAG Vancouver has been up to its collective ears in protests, demonstrations, workshops, media forums and media interviews in February and March.

Murray Warren, the Coquitlam elementary school teacher who began this particular battle, must come near to the top of everyone's "hero" list for his courageous stand begun by attempting to get his school board to institute homophobia education for teachers and to install protective measures and services for gay and lesbian students.

Unfortunately the Coquitlam board rejected his proposals saying that kids were protected under the human rights clause. One "Christian" group led by Erma Vietorize, a teacher, didn't want their children to have gay values instilled in them or to be taught how to have gay sex!!!! I really wonder what gay values are? My daughter for example isn't a saint, but she works very hard at her job and has at times worked at 3 jobs in order to make some money ahead for some of life's extras like a movie or a video or a new book. She is now in a relationship with someone who also works very hard and is going to school to apprentice in the

3

work she loves. Together they are parenting a 10 year old boy. The child goes to church with his mother, sings in the choir while his grandma plays the church organ and her son plays the bells.

Together they are redecorating their home, staying up very late to paint and paper. Does seem a dangerous value system, doesn't it? Other parents in our group report that their children contribute to U.I., C.P.P. and R.R.S.P.s, tithe to their faith communities and support any number of good causes. Really unusual values!

Second on the hero list are the 2 high-school boys who allowed their pictures and their names to be publicized.

Third are the BCTF who voted overwhelmingly to bring in resolutions to shed some light.

PFLAG members took part in workshops, CBC-TV forums, CBC-TV news programs and a demonstration outside the hotel where the BCTF convention was held where incidentally the demonstrators were asked to leave a pocket park. No reason given. Just leave. There was also a heavy police presence. Guess we looked "dangerous". We who were a mixed group of young people and grey hairs and some of us moms and grannies. Some of our

members were interviewed on the street by cameras and print media. Gertrude and Stan were also interviewed by the NorthWest Vancouver News, a magazine type paper that is fairly new that is going head to head in competition with the North Shore News, whose poisonous columnist is having a field day during this fracas. Imagine his fun in the future with the new president of the BCTF who is a holocaust survivor's kin and an expert on the holocaust. Said columnist is a holocaust denier and also a racist.

It's been a busy month.

We were asked by the reporter that interviewed us where all our parental support was. He thought that because Vancouver has such a large gay community we would have a huge membership. Where indeed are they? Where are all the parents? Standing together we can be a protective shield for our children and their children. Now that's a value that could be instilled in some people.

Editor's Note: Many of the parents of members of Vancouver's gay and lesbian community are in Alberta and Saskatchewan, safely ensconced in their respective

PFLAG Edmonton

closets while their children struggle alone.

PFLAG Saskatchewan

On our e-mail we recently received this request from Maureen of PFLAG Saskatchewan, "We are currently trying to reach the community at large to let them know of our support groups...where do you distribute your (PFLAG) pamphlets - clinics, schools, etc...? We already have ads in two bi-weekly papers and the University of Saskatchewan Sheaf. The ad just indicates our monthly meetings and contact persons. I look forward to hearing from you.

Editor's note: Please forward your comments and suggestions to

and they will be forwarded on to Maureen. Your help will be much appreciated!

New Brunswick Plea

(Courtesy Gale Force, April, '97)

Gay and lesbian students in New Brunswick feel that schools have done nothing to provide a safe environment for them. Other minorities have been represented both in the curriculum and in support materials but nothing has been done to sensitize

teachers and students to the issue of dealing with gay and lesbian teens in the province.

Richard Blaquiére, a gay positive teacher at Woodstock High School, welcomes support for an awareness campaign aimed at raising the level of awareness in schools to the plight of gay teens.

PFLAG Victoria

Annual Report

PFLAG has had a busy year. We have just started the speakers' bureau with about twelve people and growing. Members of the bureau have already spoken to a group from the NEED Crisis line and a group at S.J. Willis school.

Within the next few months, I am hoping to start up a committee for the Pride Parade. In the past we have had a table set up to give out our brochures, and quite a few members have walked in the parade with our banners and balloons. We have always had a great time and everyone looks forward to it each year.

We ordered and received a supply of the booklet *Be Yourself*. To these we will be attaching a contact/resource list for the Victoria area. The booklet will be distributed through the speakers' bureau and PFLAG to schools and

organizations that we think can use them to best advantage....

For our Sunday meetings we are looking to have a few more speakers and videos that will be of interest to our members...

I think we have a very active group and I look forward to this year's activities.

Brenda Best

Two B.C. Congregations Welcome Gays, Lesbians

(Courtesy The Edmonton Journal, April 21, 1997)

Two United Church congregations in Vancouver have become the first in B.C. to formally welcome gays and lesbians into all aspects of their church life.

Trinity United church in Kitsilano and First United church in the Downtown Eastside have joined a small national movement by officially declaring themselves "Affirming Congregations", which means they officially welcome people who have been excluded from church life because of their sexual orientation.

OVERSEAS

Homophobia on the Wane
New South Wales, Australia.

PFLAG Edmonton

Fourteen year old Christopher Tsakalos, a gay student who took the NSW Department of Education to the Supreme Court may stand to win a payout of as much as \$200,000.

Christopher has already won the first phase of his case, i.e. the NSW Department of Education has agreed:

- to tear up a contract which the Tsakalos family evidently signed under duress, promising to keep their son out of the public school system for nine months;
- to initiate inservices to combat teacher and student homophobic harassment in NSW public schools.

As in the landmark case of Jamie Nabozny, who won a nearly million dollar settlement in Wisconsin, Ill., school boards and their administrators are increasingly being held responsible for not ensuring a safe school environment for gay and lesbian students.

Christopher's mother said, "We need to change the culture that has led to the homophobic attacks on my son. What has happened to Christopher is just awful. What happened to me is awful too. After two years of torment, at least it's a start."

Additional law suits, by gay students and on behalf of gay students, are expected to be laid in the near future.

Derek Williams of the Gay and Lesbian Teachers and Students' Association said, "Now the department has been dragged kicking and screaming to the Supreme Court it is time to bring on the sort of approach that was used to wipe out racism and sexism in schools.

Homophobia is the last acceptable form of prejudice that is allowed to flourish there."

Editors Note: PFLAG Edmonton gives high praise to the Calgary Public School Board for initiating measures to ensure a safe school environment for not only gay and lesbian students but also the many heterosexual students who are harassed because they "fit the stereotype". Research shows that four out of five students who are the victims of gay-bashing are heterosexual.

We hope that both the Edmonton Public School Board and Separate School Board will soon follow Calgary's lead, making Edmonton schools safer for our lesbian, bisexual, gay and transgender children.

ALBERTA: Gays & Lesbians Left out of Social Services Redesign

by Ms "T" courtesy
Womonspace News

In January 1998, Alberta Family and Social Services will no longer exist. In its place will be Regional Authorities, local Community Services centres and local Community Services Centre Advisory Boards.

The redesign of services to children, youth and families for the greater Edmonton area is under way. Invitations have been extended to community members, agencies and organizations to participate in focus groups, consultation meetings and working groups. As a result of this process, the steering committee for Region 10 has developed a nonexclusionary definition of "family" that recognizes and values diversity. **However, the gay and lesbian community and their needs remain invisible.**

Even with the opportunity of public forums, there have been no voices identifying the gay and lesbian population as a group of individuals and families. Consequently, on March 8, 1997 a presentation was made to bring to the committee's attention the absence of gay and lesbian

PFLAG Edmonton

concerns in the preliminary service plan. To the committee's credit, co-chair Doris Badir "shamefacedly" (her expression, not mine) accepted responsibility for the oversight and gave assurances that this omission would be rectified immediately.

A second objective was to clearly articulate a zero-tolerance for discrimination of any kind, including discrimination based on grounds of sexual orientation. This human rights policy needs to include not only prospective clients of child, youth and family services but also service providers and caregivers.

Stockwell Day, the former Minister of Social Services for Alberta, drafted a policy statement that only "traditional families" be allowed to be foster parents. By this he meant families with a male father and a female mother. This excluded same-sex couples and single parents, the latter making his statement contradictory to the Alberta Human Rights Act.

Update: A new minister of Social Services, Lyle Olberg, has taken over the leadership of this department and the foster parent issue is now being appropriately addressed.

EVENTS CALENDAR**GARAGE SALE!**

Saturday, May 31

9 am to 5 pm

10612 - 124 St

(In the parking lot
at the back)

Come & get your bargain!

PRIDE WEEK EVENTS**JUNE 1997**

June 21 - Womospace
Dance co-hosted with GLCC;
8:00pm, Bonnie Doon
Community Hall, 9340 - 92
St. All lesbians, bisexuals,
gays and transgenders and
their friends and supporters
are welcome. Enjoy!

June 22 - Pride Parade:
Assemble at Gazebo Park in
Old Strathcona at 2:00pm.
The parade will be organized
here and wind its way to the
PFLAG Picnic (hot dogs &
pop) in Rollie Miles Park
(formerly South Athletic
Park) on Calgary Trail South
and 76 Ave. Other activities
might include football or
baseball games as well as a
variety of informational or
commercial activities.

If you have any other
suggestions or ideas please
don't hesitate to contact Fred
at [REDACTED] Thanks.

June 28 - Convocation Hall,
University of Alberta, 8:00pm

The centerpiece to this
concert will be the long-
awaited reprise of David
Maddux's *Boys and Girls
with Stories*, the most often
requested work EVM has
ever performed! This concert
will be the culmination of a
season of high energy,
positive outlook and a sense
of PRIDE!

Business Meeting Notes

(May 6, 1997)

A subcommittee was struck
for the purpose of exploring
ways to increase awareness
and understanding of
PFLAG/T, e.g. advertizing in
the media; networking with
helpful individuals with
common concerns such as
educators, doctors, social
workers, youth workers;
assessment of how support
meetings are/are not meeting
the needs of those who
attend. Please phone Irving at
[REDACTED] with your ideas.

**Input from everyone
(members and
nonmembers) is both
welcome and much needed.
Thankyou!**

The Pink Triangle Youth
Group is expanding their
Board of Directors to include
a representative from
PFLAG/T, GLCCE and
several youth service groups.

PFLAG Edmonton**Issues for Gays & Their
Parents**

Wednesdays, 9:30 pm

CFRN-TV, Channel 2

The recent "coming out"
experiences of *Ellen
Deegenres* on her Wednesday
night comedy program have
addressed many of the
prejudices, stereotypes, and
utter lack of knowledge that
exists in society at large. A
marvellous, and funny,
program for gays, their
parents, gay- positive and
also gay-negative people.

*Morningside**Bed & Breakfast*

"Your Home Away from
with hosts Dick & Cindy
Ryley

1645 Carmi Ave

Penticton, B.C.

Orlando Supports PFLAG

Orlando Books, 10640 Whyte
Ave, has chosen PFLAG as
their charity of the month for
June/ 97. Anyone wishing to
contribute to/ organize this
display please call Ellen at
[REDACTED] before May 25/97.
We encourage parents and
educators to take advantage
of the experienced help and
relaxing atmosphere at O.B.

It's a Gay Life!

May 1997

THERE'S NO LIFE LIKE IT

THREE YEAR MISSION

by Deanna Miyauchi

Exercising every lesbian's prerogative to boldly pursue non-traditional adventure, I joined the Canadian Forces. This drive to seek out new life and new civilization seduced me away from family, friends, university and, best of all, guaranteed that I would dodge my omnipresent ex. The military idea wasn't new, since I already was an experienced reservist, but immersing myself in the lifestyle full-time and going back behind the closet door was (1987 Forces' policy still gave the Special Investigations Unit the mandate to root out lesbians and gay men from the ranks).

If I hadn't been so preoccupied with what the fates held in store for me at recruit school, I would have noticed a series of disturbing omens. First, I left my



hometown, Edmonton, Alberta, in a skirt, a once-in-a-decade fashion occurrence. Second, I was delivered to CFB Namao for my service flight and seen off to basic training by the aforementioned (and suspiciously enthusiastic) ex. Third, the Great Edmonton Tornado struck the very next day. These things were simply lumped together in my mind with the rest of the stress and disaster I expected would be normal in the next ten weeks.

Master corporals were everywhere yelling commands from the second our feet touched the tarmac at CFB Shearwater, Nova Scotia. There were about 130 recruits in our platoon, 30 of them women. I don't recommend spending ten intense weeks of your life eating, sleeping and living in barracks with 30 sleep deprived, stressed out and extremely cranky females. Nearly every day, too, there was another PMS victim who, before morning inspection, would threaten to kill anyone who came near her can of Lemon Endust. There were squad disputes over how to do the laundry, who would distribute the underwear, when to take showers and where to place tampons in the locker layout.

I had failed junior high school Home Economics on pure, fledgling baby dyke, principle. Now, here I was, sweeping, mopping, starching and ironing, spit shining boots, hand sewing my name onto

every piece of clothing and making a perfect bed every morning. I finally had to accept these inescapable requirements of my life path and remain convinced that my Home Ec teacher, Stuffy Steffy, would have made a great recruit instructor. Only her cat eye glasses with the sterling silver holders would've contravened military dress regulations.

One significant thing sustained me throughout my recruit course. I had a crush on a red headed female master corporal whom I would furtively admire from the middle of the rank and file. She would stride in front of us, left hand holding a pacing stick snugly against her body with authority (and a divine splash of arrogance). Orders issued from her beautiful lips, in a voice low and clear and in a cadence bespeaking great confidence. I admired her athletic (and truly sexy!) build, the perfectly formed beret she wore, the sharply starched creases in her shirt sleeves and pants, everything down to the sparkling toes of her combat boots.

My master corporal goddess was a medic by trade and when our platoon broke up into smaller groups for first aid training, I was thrilled to be assigned to her class. Weeks of having no sleep had

by this time taken its toll and it was a battle even to stay awake. Only the combination of a valiant will and irrepressible lust kept my eyelids open. When I was occasionally rewarded with moments of intimate eye contact, the feelings of rapture renewed my ability to stay conscious until the end of the session. In the end though, fatigue rendered me weak and delirious and I cheated on my beloved master corporal. During the final exam I had an erotic encounter with Resuscitation Annie.

Whenever my feet burned from blisters caused by a day's marching or my lungs were exploding from the sadistic circuit training administered by the P.T. staff, I'd think of my master corporal and everything hurt a little less. On particularly bad days I would close my eyes and imagine the ultimate wedding scene. My beloved and I emerging from the doors of a huge Gothic cathedral, an honour guard on the steps, the platoon throwing confetti and the Minister of Defence and the Chief of Defence Staff wiping tears of joy from each other's faces. In time I had to gently wean myself from this fantasy because we were graduating and preparing to move on.

It's a Gay Life!

I cried as we left the base the morning after graduation ceremonies. The mast overlooking the drill square seemed to salute farewell and good luck while fresh breezes off the water of the Annapolis Basin nudged us down the highway. We had lived a whole lifetime together in just ten weeks...and now it was likely that many of us would never see each other again. It was painful. We were dispersing to training bases across the country to become field engineers, communications researchers and electronics technicians. Our last platoon exercise was a massive, tearful, hug-a-thon and then it was over. All except for the memory of a ravishing, red headed, master corporal whose inspiration can still keep my eyes open and my heart warm.

Editor's Note: Deanna's story is the first autobiography by an Edmonton lesbian to appear in this newsletter. We would love to have many more. Please contact Ellen at 465-3057 if you are willing to write your story.

Late News Flash!

PFLAG NEEDS VOLUNTEERS TO HELP COOK BRUNCH FOR CAMPERS ON SEPTEMBER 1, 1997, 5 MILES NORTH OF RED DEER. THIS IS A MUCH NEEDED FUNDRAISER. PLEASE CALL LYNNE AT 462-5958 IF YOU CAN HELP!